

MICHAEL MILTON

Michael John Milton, OAM, is an Australian Paralympic skier, Paralympic cyclist and para-triathlete with one leg, who has 6 gold and 3 silver medals as well as 2 personal bests to his credit.

Michael was born in Canberra on 21 March 1973. He learned to ski at the age of three at Thredbo where his father John was a ski patroller. By the age of nine he was already a competent skier, when he lost his left leg to bone cancer and after losing his leg he was determined to be able to ski again.

It was at about the age of thirteen when Michael became serious about ski racing and for a period trained with the Thredbo Ski Racing Club. At the age of fourteen he was selected and competed at the 1988 Innsbruck Winter Paralympics.

At the 1992 Tignes-Albertville Winter Paralympics, he won a gold medal in the Men's Slalom LW2 event, for which he received a Medal of the Order of Australia, and a silver medal in the Men's Super-G LW2 event. He became the first Australian to win a gold medal at a winter Olympics or Paralympics.

At the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Paralympics, Michael won a gold medal in the Men's Giant Slalom LW2 event, a silver medal in the Men's Slalom LW2 event, and two bronze medals in the Men's Downhill LW2 and Men's Super-G LW2 events.

In January 1996, he won a gold, silver and bronze medal at the World Skiing Championships held in Austria.

In 2000, he received an Australian Sports Medal. In 2001, he was inducted into the Australian Institute of Sport 'Best of the Best'.

Michael created history, becoming the first skier in the LW 2 class (single leg amputee) by winning four gold alpine medals, namely the Men's Downhill LW2, Men's Giant Slalom LW2, Men's Slalom LW2, and Men's Super-G LW2 events. One of these gold medals he presented to his coach Steve Graham.

It was then that he was invited to be one of three athletes on the International Paralympic Committee Commission

Always seeking a new challenge, in 2003 Michael set a new world speed skiing record for single leg skiers, flying down a mountain in Les Arcs, France at 193.16 kilometres per hour and at the same time being the fastest ever Australian skier.

A member of THS Michael has donated that Ski to the Thredbo Ski Museum where it is now proudly displayed.

Later in that year, Michael was awarded the prestigious Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award in Cannes, France.

In the same year his achievements were recognised at Sydney's Greatest Ever Sports Stars at a fundraising event for the Children's Cancer Institute which researches the causes, prevention and cure of childhood cancer.

In April 2005 he was the first person with a disability to break the 200 kilometres per hour mark with a speed of 210.4 km/h. He then aimed to beat the Australian open record of 212.26 km/h, set in 1997 by able-bodied athlete Nick Kirshner. Milton holds the open Australian downhill speed skiing record, beating the top recorded speeds by able-bodied skiers. His personal best downhill speed is 213 km/h (132 mph).¹

At the 2006 Turin Winter Paralympics, he won a silver medal in the Men's Downhill standing event.

On 12 July 2007, it was announced on *Sports Tonight* that Michael was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. He had a six centimetre tumour removed from his throat and is now in remission. Less than a year later, he was selected for the Beijing Paralympics, his first Summer Paralympics, as a cyclist.

On 7 July 2013 Milton broke the world record for running a marathon with crutches. It was Milton's first attempt at a marathon, and he finished the course in 5:23:30.

At the 2014 Sochi Games, he was the assistant alpine skiing coach of the Australian Paralympic Team.

Michael's philosophy is summarised in his words "I think there's a natural competitive spirit within myself, and perhaps the environment that I grew up in – learning to live with one leg, wanting to be competitive with my able-bodied peers – really created that mindset.... it's only a leg. The really important things in life are family, friends and having fun. None of those things have anything to do with how many legs you have."



Michael Milton at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Games